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Abstract

Concordia Teachers College opened a counseling center to serve 1300 students with a structured counseling program. However, the center was not able to serve the number of students who called for appointments. The next step was to investigate the effectiveness of group counseling procedures. Three groups were formed: (1) A-group counseling (N=22), (2) B-individual counseling (N=21), and (3) C-deferred counseling (N=28). The Mooney Problem Checklist (MPC) and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) were used for pre and post test indices. Results showed that Group A maintained a desire for change and added aggression as a result of their group experiences. They also reacted more aggressively by indicating a significantly higher number of problems in four areas of the MPC. Group B showed no change on either scale. Group C added both change and aggression to their significant changes. (KJ)

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ASSESSMENT OF GROUP COUNSELING PROCEDURES ON A SMALL COLLEGE CAMPUS

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January, 1968

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SUMMARY

Concordia Teachers College opened its counseling center on July 1, 1965, to serve 1300 students with a structured student counseling program. The current research project found its stimulus in the fact that the initial program of the counseling center was not able to serve the number of freshman students who asked for appointments. It became apparent that new approaches would be required. It seemed necessary to assess group counseling procedures in order to provide assistance where it would be needed. What advantages would there be, if any, in using group counseling technique with freshmen who experience college orientation problems? What effects on personality variables would be obtained in comparing group approaches with traditional individual counseling? Three hypotheses emerged:

1. There are no significant changes in personality variables when comparing effects of individual counseling versus group counseling.

2. There are no significant differences in personality variables of freshman students who experience group counseling compared to those who receive no counseling at all.

3. There are no significant differences in personality variables when comparing students who receive individual counseling and those who receive no counseling at all.

Group A (Group Counseling) consisted of twenty-two students, while Group B (Individual Counseling) had an N of twenty-one. Group C (Deferred Counseling) consisted of twenty-eight students. The Mooney Problem Checklist and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule were instruments used to provide pre and post test indices. Randomized groups were drawn out of 105 freshman students who requested a counseling interview in November, 1966. Using the Duncan's Range Tests of Significance, no significant differences were found on any of the eleven categories of the Mooney Problem Checklist while the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule revealed only one personality variable difference, and that was in the area of "Change". (Desiring a change) Group A showed this distinction.

After a sixteen week series of counseling sessions with independent variables as indicated, Group A maintained significant difference in "Change" but added distintion in the area of "Aggression". Group C, deferred counselees, also produced significantly higher scores on "Aggression". No other changes occurred as far as the sixteen variables of the Mooney Problem Checklist.

However, Group A (Group Counseling) showed significantly higher scores on the Mooney in categories of Social-Psychological Relationships; Courtship, Sex and Marriage; Home and Family; and Morals and Religion. Deferred counselees (Group C) showed differences in the area of Social-Psychological Relations.

The summary picture indicates that the group counselees maintained "Desire for Change" and added "Aggression" as a result of their group experiences. They also reacted more aggressively by indicating significantly higher number of problems in four areas of the Mooney Problem Checklist. Group B (Individual Counseling) showed no change on either scale. Group C (Deferred Group) added both "Change"and "Aggression" to their significant changes. Implications and inferences are described in the discussion section of the present report.

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Concordia Teachers College is a single purpose institution, preparing young men and women for the teaching profession. A crucial and responsible assignment at Concordia, as well as at any other college, is the early identification of those students who have adjustment problems which might be alleviated by some sort of supportive counseling program. Frequently too, an important service is offered in assisting the student in re-evaluating his decision to enter the teaching profession.

The design for the present study grew out of one year of experience with scheduling freshman students. The Schmieding Center, an open-access counseling center at Concordia, was faced with the prospect of serving 125 freshman students who requested individual counseling appointments during the fall quarter of 1965. At that time the counseling facility was staffed by a director, together with assistance from eight part-time faculty resource counselors. The obvious dilemma in serving the expressed needs of the students had to be met.

Experimentation with new forms and new approaches in the counseling program seemed imperative if the college was to serve the students adequately. Therefore, the primary purpose of the present research project was to assess the effects of group counseling procedures with freshman students. Dependent personality variables as identified by the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (sixteen scales) and the eleven adjustment variables of the Mooney Problem Checklist provided basis for the comparisons.

B. Research Backgrounds

The development of the intensive group experience, variously known as the T-G Group, the Laboratory Group, L-G, the Sensitivity Training Group, S-T-G, the Basic Encounter Group, B-E-G, the Intensive Workshop, I-W, - all of these an involvement with group endeavor - have become an important part of the training function in industry and in some government agencies. (1,2,3)

According to leaders in group dynamics field (4), the results of group approaches on the campus provided such meaningful learnings that in some of the institutions the demand for such methods, based on direct personal encounter, has grown beyond expectations.

Roth (5) reported significant positive effects on GPA's as a result of Group Therapy, disguised in the form of Psychology 10 (Seminar in Study Habits). The counseling approach used was based on a description of dynamics of non-achievement as described in their earlier study. (6) The approach of the investigators was designed to resolve adjustment problems through therapeutic intervention in dealing with poor study habits.

Gilbreath (7) studied the effects of group counseling on dependence and college male underachievement. He noted that underachievers with high dependent needs improved with a leader structure method, while independent underachieving men improved more in GPA with a group method structure of counseling.

These developments in the field of psychology have helped to stimulate curiosities with respect to the present study of effect of group counseling procedures. The design for the present study grew out of an experience whereby many students who had initially requested counseling assistance while filling out the Mooney Problem Checklist, declined the invitation when they were finally scheduled. It seemed possible therefore, to work with two experimental groups as well as the traditional individual counseling group, (1) the Group Counseling group (A) and the (2) Deferred Counseling group (C). Each group was observed through a sixteen week experimental period during which weekly group sessions were held for the twenty-two students of Group A, weekly individual counseling interviews made available to Group B, while Group C, members of the deferred group, did not meet with members of the counseling staff. Four persons in the original Group C urgently repeated their request for assistance and they were assigned to counselors but were then withdrawn as subjects in the study.

C. The Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested in the present study include:

1. There are no significant changes in student adjustment as reflected by the Edwards and Mooney tests, when comparing effects of individual counseling with those of group counseling.

2. There are no significant differences in student adjustment, as between freshmen who undergo group counseling procedures and those who receive no counseling at all.

3. There are no significant differences in student adjustment between those clients who receive individual counseling and those who receive no counseling at all.

The study was limited to testing the above hypotheses. Immediate benefits derived would be counseling services provided, as well as inferences for an improved counseling program at Concordia. While the study defines limits in this narrow fashion, it should also be indicated that there were also curiosities with respect to validity of the Edwards and the Mooney tests in identifying student adjustment and maladjustment areas. One form (Mooney) represents an open-end checklist while the other (Edwards) forces selection of behavior patterns, thus identifying personality traits.

Additional concerns also expressed with regard to the style of counseling within the groups as well as methods of procedure with individual counselees. While it was not the primary purpose of this study to present analysis of counselor style effectiveness, a follow-up evaluation sheet offered some data with respect to client and counselor perception of technique. These materials are available as springboards for further experimentation, analysis, and study.

METHOD

A. Design

The method involved in the present study is indicated by the design which follows.

Group A (Group Counseling) N = 22

Pre-Test (January, 1967)		Post Test (May, 1967)
Mooney Edwards	Sixteen weeks	Mooney Edwards

Group B (Individual Counseling) N = 21

Pre-Test (January, 1967)		Post Test (May, 1967)
Mooney Edwards	Sixteen weeks	Mooney (Eleven variables) Edwards (Fifteen variables)

Group C (Deferred Counseling) N = 28

Pre-Test (January, 1967)	Post Test (May, 1967)
Mooney Edwards	Mooney Edwards

Group A, consisting of twenty-two students, experienced sixteen weeks of group counseling with six counselors who are members of the Schmieding Center Resource Staff. Group counselor preparation consisted of an eight-week orientation program. The purpose of this training session was to encourage an understanding of the concepts involved in group counseling rationale and technique. There was no directive or recommendation with respect to style, emphasis, or procedure. The training sessions were conducted by Dr. Thomas F. McGee, Director of Planning and Training, Division of Mental Health, City of Chicago. The group counselors responded with a near 100% level of attendance at orientation meetings.

Twenty-one students of Group B met over a period of sixteen weeks with Concordia College Staff members also affiliated as resource counselors of the Schmieding Center. In this category the counselors were asked to conduct interviews in a similar fashion as if there had been no research program at all. The traditional approach would have counselees meet with professors in respective offices and discuss whatever subject seemed appropriate and to handle the dynamics of the counseling sessions with counseling styles of their own choosing.

Twenty-eight students participated in Group C and experienced no counseling interviews structured through Schmieding Center. After four of the original group repeated their requests for interviews, they were given appropriate assistance, but dropped from the roster of the student center observation in Group C.

Before and after the sixteen week period, the participants completed both the Mooney Checklist and the Edwards Personal Preference Profile.

B. Procedures

1. Mooney Checklist administered to entire freshman class in November, 1966.

This procedure was similar to the pattern that had been followed on the campus for the past ten years. No differential treatment afforded any member of the class. One of the questions in the checklist asks students whether they would want to have an interview with a staff member concerning problems indicated.

2. Identified 105 members of the class who requested services of the counseling center.

3. The 105 students divided at random into respective categories for A, Group Counseling; B, Individual Counseling; and C, Deferred Counseling.

4. Each student was then asked to complete the two instruments indicated earlier so that pre-session data might be established on the eleven variables on the Mooney and the fifteen personality variables on the Edwards Test.

Tests of significance were applied to determine randomness of the groups. Only one significant difference (5% level) was found, the group counselees indicated higher scores in the area of "Change". By Test Manual definition, the trait indicated "proneness to new and different things, to travel, to meet people, to experience novelty and change in daily routine." (8)

5. At the close of the sixteen week period, comparison tests were made to discover both the difference and direction of differences among the three groups with respect to the twenty-six personality variables. Table 1 indicates that the group counseling participants maintained the difference in area of "Change" but added another distinction in the area of "Aggression".

This trait is characterized by Edwards as "the tendency to attack contrary points of view, to tell others what one thinks about them, to criticize others publicly, to make fun

TABLE 1

Comparison of means of fifteen personality variables
in Post-test of

EDWARDS PERSONAL PREFERENCE SCHEDULE

Showing significant differences between groups
A, B, and C using Duncan's Range Test

Group	ACH	DEF	ORD	EXH	AUT	AFF	INT	SUC	DOM	ABA	NUR	CHG	END	HET	AGG
A - Group Counseling	12.3	10.5	9.	13.8	14.6	16.8	16.8	12.2	12.8	17.	17.7	18.2*	10.3	16.2	12.*
B - Individual Counseling	13.6	12.3	10.5	14.1	12.8	16.2	17.1	14.1	13.9	16.5	17.5	15.4	11.9	14.2	9.4
C - Deferred Counseling	13.7	11.2	8.9	15.	14.9	16.4	15.3	13.6	13.9	16.7	17.5	14.	10.3	15.6	11.2*

* Significant at .05 level

_ Pre-test showed significant difference in this group

of others, to tell others off when disagreeing with them, to get revenge for insults, to become angry, to blame others when things go wrong, to read newspaper accounts of violence." (8)

Group C, the deferred counselees, also showed distinction in the trait "Aggression". The individual counselees (Group B) showed no significant deviations in anyone of the fifteen scales of the Edwards.

Table 2 reports that at the close of the sixteen week differential treatment, there was also a significant change with respect to identifying student adjustment problems through the Mooney Problem Checklist. Again, group counselees showed most action by having significantly higher number of problems in the area of (SPR) Social-Psychological Relations, (CSM) Courtship, Sex and Marriage, (HF) Home and Family, and (MR) Morals and Religion. Deferred counselees registered significantly higher number of problems in Social-Psychological Relations when compared to individual counseling, but did not approach the mean score of the group counselees.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A. Analysis

The statistical analysis used in the present study was the Duncan's Multiple Range Test. This significance test is recommended when the task involves making comparisons only between individual groups, that is, not combining two or more groups to test these combined groups against some other group or combination of groups. Comparisons are made between all possible combinations of the separate groups. The randomized-group design with more than two groups, as employed by the present study, indicates not only significance of difference but also direction of the difference. (9)

The findings are reported (1) according to hypotheses stated earlier and (2) by table presentation according to the data gathering instruments.

1. Hypothesis: There are no significant changes in personality variables when comparing effects of individual counseling versus group counseling, as measured by fifteen variables on the Edward's Scale and eleven variables on the Mooney Test.

> Hypothesis rejected at .05 level for (SPR) Social-Psychological Relationship, (CSM) Courtship, Sex and Marriage, (HF) Home and Family, (MR) Morals and Religion, (Mooney Scales) and Aggression (Edwards Test). All significant differences were noted by group counselees.

TABLE 2

Comparison of means in Post-test areas in

MOONEY PROBLEM CHECKLIST

Showing significant differences between groups
A, B, and C using Duncan's Range Test

Group	HPD	FLE	SRA	SPR	PPR	CSM	HF	MR	ACW	FVE	CTP
A - Group Counseling	3.1	3.1	5.7	5.4*	4.5	4.*	3.1*	4.*	6.4	2.1	3.3
B - Individual Counseling	2.1	1.7	3.8	2.2	2.9	2.1	1.6	2.	6.3	2.2	3.4
C - Deferred Counseling	2.2	2.2	3.9	3.9*	3.1	3.1	1.5	3.4	5.3	2.4	2.3

Pre-test in Mooney showed no difference in groups.

* Significant at .05 level

2. Hypothesis: There are no significant differences in personality variables of freshman students who experienced group counseling compared to those who received no counseling at all.

> Significant difference at .05 level was noted in areas of (SPR) Social Psychological Relationship, (CSM) Courtship, Sex and Marriage, (HF) Home and Family, (MR) Morals and Religion, (Mooney Scales) and Aggression (Edwards Scale).

3. Hypothesis: There are no significant differences in personality variables comparing students who received individual counseling and those who received no counseling at all.

> Hypothesis rejected at .05 level for only one scale on the Mooney Checklist, (SPR) Social-Personal Relationships and (AGG) Aggression of the Edwards variables.

Table 1 reports the mean scores with the significant differences starred. Table 1 also reveals that only one pretest significance appeared and that in the area of the trait (CHG) Change on the part of group counselees.

Table 2 indicates the significant differences revealed by the Mooney Problem Checklist. It will be noted that all of the distinctions were achieved by group counselees except for the area of (SPR) Social-Psychological Relationships, which category received sufficiently high response on the part of deferred counselees to show greater than chance in possibility of uniqueness when compared to individual counselees.

The above information suggests that on the basis of present research, students who participate in group counseling tend to show more aggression and are also more willing to identify individual adjustment areas in four categories of the Mooney Problem Checklist. Although the group counselees began with a more than chance proneness toward change, they continued to show distinction in this trait at the end of the experimental period and added aggression tendencies as they began to also identify more problem areas.

B. Discussion

The effects of a group counseling approach indicates that as far as Concordia College freshman are concerned, a more permissive group procedure stimulated traits of "Change" and "Aggression". The openmindedness that resulted in group approaches to solutions of problems also resulted in identification of more personal adjustment problems through medium of

the Mooney Problem Checklist. Questions may be raised with respect to the counselor styles used in the group approaches. It is quite possible that a variation among group counselors might have produced different results. At this point it should be recognized that the present study did not prescribe, nor consciously attempt, any identifiable therapeutic approaches other than a permissive group discussion of freshman problems.

Individual counselees, on the contrary, do not register significant changes in any of the personality variables that were assessed. Because initial groups in the present study were randomized, it is reasonable to conclude, on the basis of this study, that the freshmen who were exposed to traditional individual counseling are less likely to become aggressive or to indicate any desire to change. The further inference, that a status quo in these traits is also likely to discourage freshmen from identifying adjustment problems as specified by the Mooney Problem Checklist. Whether the individual counselees actually sensed difficulties in areas identified by group counselees remains in the realm of speculation. A conclusion of the present study is that they are not ready to identify these adjustment areas.

The significant areas identified with respect to deferred counselees suggests that deferment of counseling assistance has resulted in students reporting significantly higher number of Social-Psychological problems as well as indicating higher levels of Aggression. On the basis of these observations, the suggestion is indicated that to defer counseling when requested on the part of freshmen, tends to invite additional anxiety and additional problems. Recommendations for further study are noted in the following section.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The variety of recommendations are not listed in order of importance but do suggest questions that need to be answered. It is recommended:

1. that further study include identification of effects of variable approaches in group counseling such as a Roth study at the Illinois Institute of Technology. (5) Results of this type of research would provide valuable assistance with respect to identifying more effective methods of group approaches.

2. that further studies should include additional variables such as grade point average, class attendance, and responses on an instrument such as Teacher Characteristic Schedule. (10) Since Concordia students are all committed to a teacher education program and to service in the teaching profession, it would seem that further studies should have relevance to professional attitudes in the area of teaching.

3. that future experimental work, related to comparison of the effects of individual counseling, would benefit by an analysis of counseling styles as perceived by the counselor and as perceived by the client. The present study was not concerned directly with maximal therapeutic approaches among individual counselors, but it would seem helpful to include a study of client's perception of counselors' styles so that individual counseling approaches might also reach towards higher effectiveness levels.

4. that future designs incorporate a follow-up study to determine whether the aggressiveness in identification of more problems on the part of group counselees was a temporary response to group counseling, or whether they are related to more permanent types of personality difficulties.

5. that the complacency of individual counselees should be further examined to discover whether the traditional counseling approaches actually contribute to the solution of counselee problems or whether the pattern of counseling merely succeeded in having these students cover their adjustment difficulties by not allowing them to rise to recognition level. The concern for individual counselees should also seek to discover whether the aggression indicated at the close of the experimental period was related to hostility generated by the fact that they were deferred or whether other factors contributed to producing these significant levels of aggression.

6. that on the basis of the over-all results of the present research project, Concordia Teachers College should continue with group counseling approaches with beginning freshmen, and also be prepared to provide an adequate program to assist freshmen in coping with the additional problem areas that are identified through group approaches.

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